

## PSALM CXXXV.

GENERAL REMARKS.—*This Psalm has no title. It is mainly made up of selections from other Scriptures. It has been called a mosaic, and compared to a tessellated pavement. At the outset, its first two verses are taken from Ps. cxxxiv; while the latter part of verse 2 and the commencement of verse 3 put us in mind of Ps. cxvi. 19; and verse 4 suggests Deut. vii. 6. Does not verse 5 remind us of Ps. xcv. 3? As for verse 7, it is almost identical with Jer. x. 13, which may have been taken from it. The passage contained in verse 13 is to be found in Ex. iii. 15, and verse 14 in Deut. xxxii. 36. The closing verses, 8 to 12, are in Ps. cxxxvi. From verse 15 to the end the strain is a repetition of Ps. cxv. This process of tracing the expressions to other sources might be pushed further without straining the quotations; the whole Psalm is a compound of many choice extracts, and yet it has all the continuity and freshness of an original poem. The Holy Spirit occasionally repeats himself; not because he has any lack of thoughts or words, but because it is expedient for us that we hear the same things in the same form. Yet, when our great Teacher uses repetition, it is usually with instructive variations, which deserve our careful attention.*

DIVISION.—*The first fourteen verses contain an exhortation to praise Jehovah for his goodness (verse 3), for his electing love (verse 4), his greatness (5—7), his judgments (8—12), his unchanging character (13), and his love towards his people. This is followed by a denunciation of idols (verses 15 to 18), and a further exhortation to bless the name of the Lord. It is a song full of life, vigour, variety, and devotion.*

### EXPOSITION.

**P**RAISE ye the LORD. Praise ye the name of the LORD; praise *him*,  
O ye servants of the LORD.

2 Ye that stand in the house of the LORD, in the courts of the house of our God,

3 Praise the LORD; for the LORD *is* good: sing praises unto his name; for *it is* pleasant.

4 For the LORD hath chosen Jacob unto himself, *and* Israel for his peculiar treasure.

5 For I know that the LORD *is* great, and *that* our Lord *is* above all gods.

6 Whatsoever the LORD pleased, *that* did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places.

7 He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings for the rain; he bringeth the wind out of his treasures.

8 Who smote the firstborn of Egypt, both of man and beast.

9 *Who* sent tokens and wonders into the midst of thee, O Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his servants.

10 Who smote great nations, and slew mighty kings;

11 Sihon king of the Amorites, and Og king of Bashan, and all the kingdoms of Canaan;

12 And gave their land *for* an heritage, an heritage unto Israel his people.

13 Thy name, O LORD, *endureth* for ever; *and* thy memorial, O LORD, throughout all generations.

14 For the LORD will judge his people, and he will repent himself concerning his servants.

1. "Praise ye the LORD," or, *Hallelujah*. Let those who are themselves full of holy praise labour to excite the like spirit in others. It is not enough for us

to praise God ourselves, we are quite unequal to such a work ; let us call in all our friends and neighbours, and if they have been slack in such service, let us stir them up to it with loving exhortations. "*Praise ye the name of the LORD.*" Let his character be extolled by you, and let all that he has revealed concerning himself be the subject of your song ; for this is truly his *name*. Specially let his holy and incommunicable name of "Jehovah" be the object of your adoration. By that name he sets forth his self-existence, and his immutability ; let these arouse your praises of his Godhead. Think of him with love, admire him with heartiness, and then extol him with ardour. Do not only magnify the Lord because he is God ; but study his character and his doings, and thus render intelligent, appreciative praise. "*Praise him, O ye servants of the LORD.*" If others are silent, you must not be ; you must be the first to celebrate his praises. You are "servants," and this is part of your service ; his "name" is named upon you, therefore celebrate his name with praises ; you know what a blessed Master he is, therefore speak well of him. Those who shun his service are sure to neglect his praise ; but as grace has made you his own personal servants, let your hearts make you his court-musicians. Here we see the servant of the Lord arousing his fellow-servants by three times calling upon them to praise. Are we then, so slow in such a sweet employ ? Or is it that when we do our utmost it is all too little for such a Lord ? Both are true. We do not praise enough ; we cannot praise too much. We ought to be always at it ; answering to the command here given—Praise, Praise, Praise. Let the three-in-one have the praises of our spirit, soul, and body. For the past, the present, and the future, let us render three-fold hallelujahs.

2. "*Ye that stand in the house of the LORD, in the courts of the house of our God.*" You are highly favoured ; you are the domestics of the palace, nearest to the Father of the heavenly family, privileged to find your home in his house ; therefore you must, beyond all others, abound in thanksgiving. You "stand," or abide in the temple ; you are constant occupants of its various courts ; and therefore from you we expect unceasing praise. Should not ministers be celebrated for celebrating the praises of Jehovah ? Should not church-officers and church-members excel all others in the excellent duty of adoration ? Should not all of every degree who wait even in his outer courts unite in his worship ? Ought not the least and feeblest of his people to proclaim his praises, in company with those who live nearest to him ? Is it not a proper thing to remind them of their obligations ? Is not the Psalmist wise when he does so in this case and in many others ? Those who can call Jehovah "*our God*" are highly blessed, and therefore should abound in the work of blessing him. Perhaps this is the sweetest word in these two verses. "*This God is our God for ever and ever.*" "*Our God*" signifies possession, communion in possession, assurance of possession, delight in possession. Oh the unutterable joy of calling God our own !

3. "*Praise the LORD.*" Do it again ; continue to do it ; do it better and more heartily ; do it in growing numbers ; do it at once. There are good reasons for praising the Lord, and among the first is this—"for the LORD is good." He is so good that there is none good in the same sense or degree. He is so good that all good is found in him, flows from him, and is rewarded by him. The word God is brief for good ; and truly God is the essence of goodness. Should not his goodness be well spoken of ? Yea, with our best thoughts, and words, and hymns let us glorify his name. "*Sing praises unto his name ; for it is pleasant.*" The adjective may apply to the singing and to the name—they are both pleasant. The vocal expression of praise by sacred song is one of our greatest delights. We were created for this purpose, and hence it is a joy to us. It is a charming duty to praise the lovely name of our God. All pleasure is to be found in the joyful worship of Jehovah ; all joys are in his sacred name as perfumes lie slumbering in a garden of flowers. The mind expands, the soul is lifted up, the heart warms, the whole being is filled with delight when we are engaged in singing the high praises of our Father, Redeemer, Comforter. When in any occupation goodness and pleasure unite, we do well to follow it up without stint : yet it is to be feared that few of us sing to the Lord at all in proportion as we talk to men.

4. "*For the LORD hath chosen Jacob unto himself.*" Jehovah hath chosen Jacob. Should not the sons of Jacob praise him who has so singularly favoured them ? Election is one of the most forcible arguments for adoring love. Chosen ! chosen unto himself !—who can be grateful enough for being concerned in this privilege ? "*Jacob have I loved,*" said Jehovah, and he gave no reason for his love except that

he chose to love. Jacob had then done neither good nor evil, yet thus the Lord determined, and thus he spake. If it be said that the choice was made upon foresight of Jacob's character, it is, perhaps, even more remarkable; for there was little enough about Jacob that could deserve special choice. By nature Jacob was by no means the most lovable of men. No, it was sovereign grace which dictated the choice. But, mark, it was not a choice whose main result was the personal welfare of Jacob's seed: the nation was chosen by God *unto himself*, to answer the divine ends and purposes in blessing all mankind. Jacob's race was chosen to be the Lord's own, to be the trustees of his truth, the maintainers of his worship, the mirrors of his mercy. Chosen they were; but mainly for this end, that they might be a peculiar people, set apart unto the service of the true God.

"*And Israel for his peculiar treasure.*" God's choice exalts; for here the name is changed from Jacob, the supplanter, to Israel, the prince. The love of God gives a new name and imparts a new value; for the comparison to a royal treasure is a most honourable one. As kings have a special regalia, and a selection of the rarest jewels, so the Lord deigns to reckon his chosen nation as his wealth, his delight, his glory. What an honour to the spiritual Israel that they are all this to the Lord their God! We are a people near and dear unto him; precious and honourable in his sight. How can we refuse our loudest, heartiest, sweetest music? If we did not extol him, the stones in the street would cry out against us.

5. "*For I know that the LORD is great, and that our Lord is above all gods.*" The greatness of God is as much a reason for adoration as his goodness, when we are once reconciled to him. God is great positively, great comparatively, and great superlatively—"above all gods." Of this the Psalmist had an assured personal persuasion. He says positively, "I know." It is knowledge worth possessing. He knew by observation, inspiration, and realization; he was no agnostic, he was certain and clear upon the matter. He not only knows the greatness of Jehovah, but that as the Adonai, or Ruler, "our Lord" is infinitely superior to all the imaginary deities of the heathen, and to all great ones besides.

"Let princes hear, let angels know,  
How mean their natures seem;  
Those gods on high, and gods below,  
When once compared with him."

Many have thought to worship Jehovah, and other gods with him; but this holy man tolerated no such notion. Others have thought to combine their religion with obedience to the unrighteous laws of tyrannical princes; this, also, the sweet singer of Israel denounced; for he regarded the living God as altogether above all men, who as magistrates and princes have been called gods. Observe here the fourth of the five "fors." Verses 3, 4, 5, and 14 contain reasons for praise, each set forth with "for." A fruitful meditation might be suggested by this.

6. "*Whatever the LORD pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places.*" His will is carried out throughout all space. The king's warrant runs in every portion of the universe. The heathen divided the great domain; but Jupiter does not rule in heaven, nor Neptune on the sea, nor Pluto in the lower regions; Jehovah rules over all. His decree is not defeated, his purpose is not frustrated: in no one point is his good pleasure set aside. The word "whatsoever" is of the widest range and includes all things, and the four words of peace which are mentioned comprehend all space; therefore the declaration of the text knows neither limit nor exception. Jehovah works his will: he pleases to do, and he performs the deed. None can stay his hand. How different this from the gods whom the heathen fabled to be subject to all the disappointments, failures, and passions of men! How contrary even to those so-called Christian conceptions of God which subordinate him to the will of man, and make his eternal purposes the football of human caprice. Our theology teaches us no such degrading notions of the Eternal as that he can be baffled by man. "His purpose shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure." No region is too high, no abyss too deep, no land too distant, no sea too wide for his omnipotence: his divine pleasure travels post over all the realm of nature, and his behests are obeyed.

7. "*He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth.*" Here we are taught the power of God in creation. The process of evaporation is passed by unnoticed by the many, because they see it going on all around them; the usual ceases to be wonderful to the thoughtless, but it remains a marvel to the instructed.

When we consider upon what an immense scale evaporation is continually going on, and how needful it is for the existence of all life, we may well admire the wisdom and the power which are displayed therein. All around us from every point of the horizon the vapour rises, condenses into clouds, and ultimately descends as rain. Whence the vapours originally ascended from which our showers are formed it would be impossible to tell; most probably the main part of them comes from the tropical regions, and other remote places at "the ends of the earth." It is the Lord who causes them to rise, and not a mere law. What is law without a force at the back of it? "*He maketh lightnings for the rain.*" There is an intimate connection between lightning and rain, and this would seem to be more apparent in Palestine than even with ourselves; for we constantly read of thunderstorms in that country as attending heavy down-pours of rain. Lightning is not to be regarded as a lawless force, but as a part of that wonderful machinery by which the earth is kept in a fit condition: a force as much under the control of God as any other, a force most essential to our existence. The ever-changing waters, rains, winds, and electric currents circulate as if they were the life-blood and vital spirits of the universe. "*He bringeth the wind out of his treasures.*" This great force which seems left to its own wild will is really under the supreme and careful government of the Lord. As a monarch is specially master of the contents of his own treasure, so is our God the Lord of the tempest and hurricane; and as princes do not spend their treasure without taking note and count of it, so the Lord does not permit the wind to be wasted, or squandered without purpose. Everything in the material world is under the immediate direction and control of the Lord of all. Observe how the Psalmist brings before us the personal action of Jehovah: "he causeth," "he maketh," "he bringeth." Everywhere the Lord worketh all things, and there is no power which escapes his supremacy. It is well for us that it is so: one bandit force wandering through the Lord's domains defying his control would cast fear and trembling over all the provinces of providence. Let us praise Jehovah for the power and wisdom with which he rules clouds, and lightnings, and winds, and all other mighty and mysterious agencies.

8. "*Who smote the firstborn of Egypt, both of man and beast.*" Herein the Lord is to be praised; for this deadly smiting was an act of justice against Egypt, and of love to Israel. But what a blow it was! All the firstborn slain in a moment! How it must have horrified the nation, and cowed the boldest enemies of Israel! Beasts because of their relationship to man as domestic animals are in many ways made to suffer with him. The firstborn of beasts must die as well as the firstborn of their owners, for the blow was meant to astound and overwhelm, and it accomplished its purpose. The firstborn of God had been sorely smitten, and they were set free by the Lord's meting out to their oppressors the like treatment.

9. "*Who sent tokens and wonders into the midst of thee, O Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his servants.*" The Lord is still seen by the Psalmist as sending judgments upon rebellious men; he keeps before us the personal action of God, "who sent tokens, etc." The more distinctly God is seen the better. Even in plagues he is to be seen, as truly as in mercies. The plagues were not only terrible wonders which astounded men, but forcible tokens or signs by which they were instructed. No doubt the plagues were aimed at the various deities of the Egyptians, and were a grand exposure of their impotence: each one had its own special significance. The judgments of the Lord were no side blows, they struck the nation at the heart; he sent his bolts "into the midst of thee, O Egypt!" These marvels happened in the centre of the proud and exclusive nation of Egypt, which thought itself far superior to other lands; and many of these plagues touched the nation in points upon which it prided itself. The Psalmist addresses that haughty nation, saying, "O Egypt," as though reminding it of the lessons which it had been taught by the Lord's right hand. Imperious Pharaoh had been the ringleader in defying Jehovah, and he was made personally to smart for it; nor did his flattering courtiers escape, upon each one of them the scourge fell heavily. God's servants are far better off than Pharaoh's servants: those who stand in the courts of Jehovah are delivered, but the courtiers of Pharaoh are smitten all of them, for they were all partakers in his evil deeds. The Lord is to be praised for thus rescuing his own people, and causing their cruel adversaries to bite the dust. Let no true Israelite forget the song of the Red Sea, but anew let us hear a voice summoning us to exulting praise: "Sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously."

10. "*Who smote great nations, and slew mighty kings.*" The nations of Canaan

joined in the desperate resistance offered by their monarchs, and so they were smitten ; while their kings, the ringleaders of the fight, were slain. Those who resist the divine purpose will find it hard to kick against the pricks. The greatness of the nations and the might of the kings availed nothing against the Lord. He is prepared to mete out vengeance to those who oppose his designs : those who dream of him as too tender to come to blows have mistaken the God of Israel. He intended to bless the work through his chosen people, and he would not be turned from his purpose : cost what it might, he would preserve the candle of truth which he had lighted, even though the blood of nations should be spilt in its defence. The wars against the Canaanite races were a price paid for the setting up of a nation which was to preserve for the whole world the lively oracles of God.

11. "*Sihon king of the Amorites, and Og king of Bashan.*" These two kings were the first to oppose, and they were among the most notable of the adversaries : their being smitten is therefore a special object of song for loyal Israelites. The enmity of these two kings was wanton and unprovoked, and hence their overthrow was the more welcome to Israel. Sihon had been victorious in his war with Moab, and thought to make short work with Israel, but he was speedily overthrown : Og was of the race of the giants, and by his huge size inspired the tribes with dread ; but they were encouraged by the previous overthrow of Sihon, and soon the giant king fell beneath their sword. "*And all the kingdoms of Canaan.*" Many were these petty principalities, and some of them were populous and valiant ; but they all fell beneath the conquering hand of Joshua, for the Lord was with him. Even so shall all the foes of the Lord's believing people in these days be put to the rout : Satan and the world shall be overthrown, and all the hosts of sin shall be destroyed, for our greater Joshua leads forth our armies, conquering and to conquer.

Note that in this verse we have the details of matters which were mentioned in the bulk in the previous stanza : it is well when we have sung of mercies in the gross to consider them one by one, and give to each individual blessing a share in our song. It is well to preserve abundant memorials of the Lord's deliverance, so that we not only sing of mighty kings as a class, but also of "*Sihon king of the Amorites, and Og king of Bashan*" as distinct persons.

12. "*And gave their land for an heritage, an heritage unto Israel his people.*" Jehovah is Lord Paramount, and permits men to hold their lands upon lease, terminable at his pleasure. The nations of Canaan had become loathsome with abominable vices, and they were condemned by the great Judge of all the earth to be cut off from the face of the country which they defiled. The twelve tribes were charged to act as their executioners, and as their fee they were to receive Canaan as a possession. Of old the Lord had given this land to Abraham and his seed by a covenant of salt, but he allowed the Amorites and other tribes to sojourn in it till their iniquity was full, and then he bade his people come and take their own out of the holders' hands. Canaan was their heritage because they were the Lord's heritage, and he gave it to them actually because he had long before given it to them by promise.

The Lord's chosen still have a heritage from which none can keep them back. Covenant blessings of inestimable value are secured to them ; and, as surely as God has a people, his people shall have a heritage. To them it comes by gift, though they have to fight for it. Often does it happen when they slay a sin or conquer a difficulty that they are enriched by the spoil : to them even evils work for good, and trials ensure triumphs. No enemy shall prevail so as to really injure them, for they shall find a heritage where once they were opposed by "*all the kingdoms of Canaan.*"

13. "*Thy name, O LORD, endureth for ever.*" God's name is eternal, and will never be changed. His character is immutable ; his fame and honour also shall remain to all eternity. There shall always be life in the name of Jesus, and sweetness and consolation. Those upon whom the Lord's name is named in verity and truth shall be preserved by it, and kept from all evil, world without end. *JEHOVAH* is a name which shall outlive the ages, and retain the fulness of its glory and might for ever. "*And thy memorial, O LORD, throughout all generations.*" Never shall men forget thee, O Lord. The ordinances of thine house shall keep thee in men's memories, and thine everlasting gospel and the grace which goes therewith shall be abiding remembrancers of thee. Grateful hearts will for ever beat to thy praise, and enlightened minds shall continue to marvel at all thy wondrous works. Men's memorials decay, but the memorial of the Lord abideth evermore. What a comfort

to desponding minds, trembling for the ark of the Lord! No, precious Name, thou shalt never perish! Fame of the Eternal, thou shalt never grow dim!

This verse must be construed in its connection, and it teaches us that the honour and glory gained by the Lord in the overthrow of the mighty kings would never die out. Israel for long ages reaped the benefit of the *prestige* which the divine victories had brought to the nation. Moreover, the Lord in thus keeping his covenant which he made with Abraham, when he promised to give the land to his seed, was making it clear that his memorial contained in promises and covenant would never be out of his sight. His name endures in all its truthfulness, for those who occupied Israel's land were driven out that the true heirs might dwell therein in peace.

14. "*For the Lord will judge his people.*" He will exercise personal discipline over them, and not leave it to their foes to maltreat them at pleasure. When the correction is ended he will arise and avenge them of their oppressors, who for a while were used by him as his rod. He may seem to forget his people, but it is not so; he will undertake their cause and deliver them. The judges of Israel were also her deliverers, and such is the Lord of hosts: in this sense—as ruling, preserving, and delivering his chosen—Jehovah will judge his people. "*And he will repent himself concerning his servants.*" When he has smitten them, and they lie low before him, he will pity them as a father pitieth his children, for he doth not afflict willingly. The Psalm speaks after the manner of men: the nearest description that words can give of the Lord's feeling towards his suffering servants is that he repents the evil which he inflicted upon them. He acts as if he had changed his mind and regretted smiting them. It goes to the heart of God to see his beloved ones oppressed by their enemies: though they deserve all they suffer, and more than all, yet the Lord cannot see them smart without a pang. It is remarkable that the nations by which God has afflicted Israel have all been destroyed as if the tender Father hated the instruments of his children's correction. The chosen nation is here called, first, "his people," and then "his servants:" as his people he judges them, as his servants he finds comfort in them, for so the word may be read. He is most tender to them when he sees their service; hence the Scripture saith, "I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." Should not the "servants" of God praise him? He plagued Pharaoh's servants; but as for his own he has mercy upon them, and returns to them in love after he has in the truest affection smitten them for their iniquities. "Praise him, O ye servants of the Lord."

Now we come to the Psalmist's denunciation of idols, which follows most naturally upon his celebration of the one only living and true God.

15 The idols of the heathen *are* silver and gold, the work of men's hands.  
16 They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not;

17 They have ears, but they hear not; neither is there *any* breath in their mouths.

18 They that make them are like unto them: *so* is every one that trusteth in them.

15. "*The idols of the heathen are silver and gold, the work of men's hands.*" Their essential material is dead metal, their attributes are but the qualities of senseless substances, and what of form and fashion they exhibit they derive from the skill and labour of those who worship them. It is the height of insanity to worship metallic manufactures. Though silver and gold are useful to us when we rightly employ them, there is nothing about them which can entitle them to reverence and worship. If we did not know the sorrowful fact to be indisputable, it would seem to be impossible that intelligent beings could bow down before substances which they must themselves refine from the ore, and fashion into form. One would think it less absurd to worship one's own hands than to adore that which those hands have made. What great works can these mock deities perform for man when they are themselves the works of man? Idols are fitter to be played with, like dolls by babes, than to be adored by grown-up men. Hands are better used in breaking than in making objects which can be put to such an idiotic use. Yet the heathen love their abominable deities better than silver and gold: it were well if we could say that some professed believers in the Lord had as much love for *him*.

16. *"They have mouths."* For their makers fashioned them like themselves. An opening is made where the mouth should be, and yet it is no mouth, for they eat not, *they speak not.* They cannot communicate with their worshippers; they are dumb as death. If they cannot even speak, they are not even so worthy of worship as our children at school. Jehovah speaks, and it is done; but these images utter never a word. Surely, if they could speak, they would rebuke their votaries. Is not their silence a still more powerful rebuke? When our philosophical teachers deny that God has made any verbal revelation of himself they also confess that their god is dumb.

*"Eyes have they, but they see not."* Who would adore a blind man—how can the heathen be so mad as to bow themselves before a blind image? The eyes of idols have frequently been very costly; diamonds have been used for that purpose; but of what avail is the expense, since they see nothing? If they cannot even see us, how can they know our wants, appreciate our sacrifices, or spy out for us the means of help? What a wretched thing, that a man who can see should bow down before an image which is blind! The worshipper is certainly physically in advance of his god, and yet mentally he is on a level with it; for assuredly his foolish heart is darkened, or he would not so absurdly play the fool.

17. *"They have ears,"* and very large ones too, if we remember certain of the Hindoo idols. *"But they hear not."* Useless are their ears; in fact, they are mere counterfeits and deceptions. Ears which men make are always deaf: the secret of hearing is wrapped up with the mystery of life, and both are in the unsearchable mind of the Lord. It seems that these heathen gods are dumb, and blind, and deaf—a pretty bundle of infirmities to be found in a deity! *"Neither is there any breath in their mouths;"* they are dead, no sign of life is perceptible; and breathing, which is of the essence of animal life, they never know. Shall a man waste his breath in crying to an idol which has no breath? Shall life offer up petitions to death? Verily, this is a turning of things upside down.

18. *"They that make them are like unto them:"* they are as blockish, as senseless, as stupid as the gods they have made, and, like them they are the objects of divine abhorrence, and shall be broken in pieces in due time. *"So is every one that trusteth in them."* The idol-worshippers are as bad as the idol-makers; for if there were none to worship, there would be no market for the degrading manufacture. Idolaters are spiritually dead, they are the mere images of men, their best being is gone, they are not what they seem. Their mouths do not really pray, their eyes see not the truth, their ears hear not the voice of the Lord, and the life of God is not in them. Those who believe in their own inventions in religion betray great folly, and an utter absence of the quickening Spirit. Gracious men can see the absurdity of forsaking the true God and setting up rivals in his place; but those who perpetrate this crime think not so: on the contrary, they pride themselves upon their great wisdom, and boast of "advanced thought" and "modern culture." Others there are who believe in a baptismal regeneration which does not renew the nature, and they make members of Christ and children of God who have none of the spirit of Christ, or the signs of adoption. May we be saved from such mimicry of divine work lest we also become like our idols.

19 Bless the LORD, O house of Israel: bless the LORD, O house of Aaron:

20 Bless the LORD, O house of Levi: ye that fear the LORD, bless the LORD.

21 Blessed be the LORD out of Zion, which dwelleth at Jerusalem. Praise ye the LORD.

19. *"Bless the LORD, O house of Israel."* All of you, in all your tribes, praise the one Jehovah. Each tribe, from Reuben to Benjamin, has its own special cause for blessing the Lord, and the nation as a whole has substantial reasons for pouring out benedictions upon his name. Those whom God has named "the house of Israel," a family of prevailing princes, ought to show their loyalty by thankfully bowing before their sovereign Lord. *"Bless the LORD, O house of Aaron."* These were elected to high office and permitted to draw very near to the divine presence; therefore they beyond all others were bound to bless the Lord. Those who are favoured to be leaders in the church should be foremost in adoration. In God's house the house of Aaron should feel bound to speak well of his name before all the house of Israel.

20. "*Bless the LORD, O house of Levi.*" These helped the priests in other things, let them aid them in this also. The house of Israel comprehends all the chosen seed; then we come down to the smaller but more central ring of the house of Aaron, and now we widen out to the whole tribe of Levi. Let reverence and adoration spread from man to man until the whole lump of humanity shall be leavened. The house of Levi had choice reasons for blessing God: read the Levite story and see. Remember that the whole of the Levites were set apart for holy service, and supported by the tribes allotted to them; therefore they were in honour bound above all others to worship Jehovah with cheerfulness.

"*Ye that fear the LORD, bless the LORD.*" These are the choicer spirits, the truly spiritual: they are not the Lord's in name only, but in heart and spirit. The Father seeketh such to worship him. If Aaron and Levi both forget and fail, these will not. It may be that this verse is intended to bring in God-fearing men who were not included under Israel, Aaron, and Levi. They were Gentile proselytes, and this verse opens the door and bids them enter. Those who fear God need not wait for any other qualification for sacred service; godly fear proves us to be in the covenant with Israel, in the priesthood with Aaron, and in the service of the Lord with Levi. Filial fear, such as saints feel towards the Lord, does not hinder their praise; nay, it is the main source and fountain of their adoration.

21. "*Blessed be the LORD out of Zion, which dwelleth at Jerusalem.*" Let him be most praised at home. Where he blesses most, let him be blessed most. Let the beloved mount of Zion, and the chosen city of Jerusalem echo his praises. He remains among his people: he is their dwelling-place, and they are his dwelling-place: let this intimate communion ensure intense gratitude on the part of his chosen. The temple of holy solemnities which is Christ, and the city of the Great King, which is the church, may fitly be regarded as the head-quarters of the praises of Jehovah, the God of Israel. "*Praise ye the LORD.*" Hallelujah. Amen, and Amen.

#### EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

*Whole Psalm.*—This glorious Psalm of universal praise, placed at the end of the "Songs of Up-goings," which flow into it, and find their response in it, may be likened to a large and beautiful lake, into which rivers discharge their waters, and lose themselves in its calm expanse.—*Chr. Wordsworth.*

*Whole Psalm.*—This Psalm differs from that which went before. Its drift is not only to stir up the priests and Levites, as it was in the former, to this duty of praising God, but *the people* also: and that, 1. Because the arguments which here he brings to press this duty, did in common concern both priests and people; and, 2. Because that clause, which is here added, "*in the courts of the house of our God,*" may be extended to the people, as well as to the priests, seeing there were some courts in the Temple which were for the people to worship God in.—*Arthur Jackson.*

*Whole Psalm.*—This is a song of praise to the Lord for his goodness as the Lord of creation, in seven verses; for his grace as the deliverer of his people, in seven more; and for his unity as the only true and living God, in seven more.—*James G. Murphy.*

*Whole Psalm.*—This seems to have been the morning hymn which the Levites were called upon to sing at the opening of the gates of the Temple; and, as some think, the one before was used at shutting them in the evening.—*John Kitto, in "The Pictorial Bible."*

*Verse 1.*—This verse and the following are word for word with the first verse of the last Psalm, and are now repeated, with the view of keeping up the praise then and there commenced.—*Robert Bellarmine.*

*Verse 1.*—"Praise ye the LORD." *Hallelujah* is the Hebrew word. It signifies "Praise ye the LORD." By this the faithful do provoke one another to give thanks unto God, and they cheer up their hearts and tune their spirits to perform this duty in the best manner, by making this preface as it were thereunto. True joy of the



Holy Ghost will not endure to be kept and cooped up in any one man's breast and bosom, but it striveth to get companions both for the pouring out and imparting of itself unto them, that they may be filled and refreshed out of this spring of joy ; as also that itself may be the more increased and inflamed by the united rejoicing of many good hearts together, that are all baptized in one spirit, and are thereby made able to inflame and to edify one another.—*Thomas Brightman* (1557—1607), in *"The Revelation of St. John Illustrated."*

*Verse 1.*—"Praise ye the name of the LORD." That is, the Lord himself, and the perfections of his nature ; his greatness, goodness, grace, and mercy ; his holiness, justice, power, truth, and faithfulness. Also his word, by which he makes known himself : this is a distinguishing blessing to his people, for which he is to be praised : see Ps. xlviii. 1, and Ps. cxlvii. 19, 20.—*John Gill.*

*Verse 1.*—"The name of the LORD."—The first discovery of the name I AM, which signifies the Divine eternity, as well as immutability, was for the comfort of the oppressed Israelites in Egypt : Exodus iii. 14, 15. It was then published from the secret place of the Almighty, as the only strong cordial to refresh them. It hath not yet, it shall not ever, lose its virtue in any of the miseries that have or shall successively befall the church. 'Tis as durable as the God whose name it is : he is still I AM and the same to the church as he was then to his Israel. His spiritual Israel have a greater right to the glories of it than the carnal Israel could have. No oppression can be greater than theirs ; what was a comfort suited to that distress hath the same suitableness to every other oppression. It was not a temporary name, but a name for ever, his " memorial to all generations " (verse 15), and reacheth to the church of the Gentiles, with whom he treats as the God of Abraham, ratifying that covenant by the Messiah, which he made with Abraham the father of the faithful.—*Stephen Charnock.*

*Verse 1.*—"The name of the LORD." Jehovah is called "the name" as far exceeding all other names, and as being proper and peculiar only to the true God. Other things are sometimes called gods, but nothing is or can be called Jehovah but only the Almighty Creator of the world. "That men may know," saith David, "that thou, whose name is Jehovah, art the Most High over all the earth" : Ps. lxxxiii. 18. From his calling himself JEHOVAH the LORD, we may easily gather what kind of thoughts he would have us, his creatures, entertain in our minds concerning him. When we think of him, we must raise our thoughts above all things else, and think of him as the Universal Being of the world, that gives essence and existence to all things in it : as Jehovah, the Being in whom we particularly, as well as other things, live and move, and have our being : as Jehovah, the Lord paramount over the whole world, to whom all angels and archangels in heaven, with all the kings and kingdoms upon earth, are entirely subject : as Jehovah, in whom all perfections are so perfectly united that they are all but one infinite perfection : as Jehovah, knowledge itself, always actually knowing all things that ever were, or are, or will be, or can be known : as Jehovah, wisdom itself, always contriving, ordering, and disposing of all, and everything, in the best order, after the best manner, and to the best possible end : as Jehovah, power, omnipotence itself, continually doing what he wills, only by willing it should be done, and always working either with means or without means, as he himself sees good : as Jehovah, light and glory itself, shining forth in and by and through everything that is made or done in the whole world. as Jehovah, holiness, purity, simplicity, greatness, majesty, eminency, super-eminency itself, infinitely exalted above all things else, existing in, and of himself, and having all things else continually subsisting in him : as Jehovah, goodness itself, doing and making all things good, and so communicating his goodness to all his creatures as to be the only fountain of all the goodness that is in any of them : as Jehovah, justice and righteousness itself, giving to all their due, and exacting no more of any man than what is absolutely due to him : as Jehovah, mercy itself, pardoning and forgiving all the sins that mankind commit against him, as soon as they repent and turn to him : as Jehovah, patience and longsuffering itself, bearing a long time, even with those who continue in their rebellions against him, waiting for their coming to a due sense of their folly and madness, that he may be gracious and merciful to them ; as Jehovah, love and kindness, and bounty itself, freely distributing his blessings among all his creatures, both good and bad, just and unjust, those that love him, and those that love him not : as Jehovah, truth and faithfulness itself, always performing what he promiseth to his people : as Jehovah, infinitude, immensity itself, in all things, to all things,

beyond all things, everywhere, wholly, essentially, continually present : as Jehovah, constancy, immutability, eternity itself, without any variability, or shadow of change ; yesterday, to-day, and for ever the same. In a word, when we think of the Most High God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, we should think of him as Jehovah, Unity in Trinity, Trinity in Unity, Three Persons, One Being, One Essence, One Lord, One Jehovah, blessed for ever. This is that glorious, that Almighty being, which the Psalmist here means when he saith, "*Praise ye the name of the LORD.*"—*William Beveridge, 1636—1708.*

*Verse 1.*—"Praise him, O ye servants of the LORD." For ye will do nothing out of place by praising your Lord as servants. And if ye were to be for ever only servants, ye ought to praise the Lord ; how much more ought those servants to praise the Lord who have obtained the privilege of sons ?—*Augustine.*

*Verse 1.*—"Praise," "praise," "praise." When duties are thus inculcated, it noteth the necessity and excellency thereof ; together with our dulness and backwardness thereunto.—*John Trapp.*

*Verses 1, 2, 21.*—"Praise." To prevent any feeling of weariness which might arise from the very frequent repetition of this exhortation to praise God, it is only necessary to remember that there is no sacrifice in which he takes greater delight than in the expression of praise. Thus (Ps. l. 14), "Sacrifice unto the Lord thanksgiving, and pay thy vows unto the Most High ;" and (Ps. cxvi. 12, 13), "What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits toward me ? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD." Particular attention is to be paid to those passages of Scripture which speak in such high terms of that worship of God which is spiritual ; otherwise we may be led, in the exercise of a misguided zeal, to spend our labour upon trifles, and in this respect imitate the example of too many who have wearied themselves with ridiculous attempts to invent additions to the service of God, while they have neglected what is of all other things most important. That is the reason why the Holy Spirit so repeatedly inculcates the duty of praise. It is that we may not undervalue, or grow careless in this devotional exercise. It implies, too, an indirect censure of our tardiness in proceeding to the duty ; for he would not reiterate the admonition were we ready and active in the discharge of it.—*John Calvin.*

*Verses 1, 2, 3.*—As *Gotthold* was one day passing a tradesman's house, he heard the notes of a Psalm, with which the family were concluding their morning meal. He was deeply affected, and, with a full heart, said to himself : O my God, how pleasing to my ears is the sound of thy praise, and how comforting to my soul the thought that there are still a few who bless thee for thy goodness. Alas, the great bulk of mankind have become brutalized, and resemble the swine, which in harvest gather and fatten upon the acorns beneath the oak, but show to the tree, which bore them, no other thanks than rubbing off its bark, and tearing up the sod around it. In former times, it was the law in certain monasteries, that the chanting of the praise of God should know no interruption, and that one choir of monks should, at stated intervals, relieve another in the holy employment. To the superstition and trust in human works, of which there may have been here a mixture, we justly assign a place among the wood, hay, and stubble (1 Cor. iii. 12). At the same time it is undeniably right that thy praise should never cease ; and were men to be silent, the very stones would cry out. We must begin eternal life here below, not only in our conscience, but also with our praise. Our soul ought to be like a flower, not merely receiving the gentle influence of heaven, but, in its turn, and as if in gratitude, exhaling also a sweet and pleasant perfume. It should be our desire, as it once was that of a pious man, that our hearts should melt and dissolve like incense in the fire of love, and yield the sweet fragrance of praise ; or we should be like the holy martyr who professed himself willing to be consumed, if from his ashes a little flower might spring and blossom to the glory of God. We should be ready to give our very blood to fertilize the garden of the church, and render it more productive of the fruit of praise.

Well, then, my God, I will praise and extol thee with heart and mouth to the utmost of my power. Oh, that without the interruptions which eating, and drinking, and sleep require, I could apply myself to this heavenly calling ! Every mouthful of air which I inhale is mixed with the goodness which preserves my life ; let every breath which I exhale be mingled at least with a hearty desire for thy honour and praise.

Hallelujah ! Ye holy angels, ye children of men, and all ye creatures, praise

the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together.—*Christian Scriver [Gotthold], 1629—1693.*

*Verse 3.*—“Praise the LORD.” Hallelujah (praise to Jah I) for good (is) Jehovah, Make music to his name, for it is lovely. The last words may also be translated, he is lovely, i. e. an object worthy of supreme attachment.—*Joseph Addison Alexander.*

*Verse 3.*—“Praise the LORD; for the LORD is good.” That is, originally, transcendently, effectively; he is good, and doeth good (Ps. cxix. 68), and is therefore to be praised with mind, mouth, and practice.—*John Trapp.*

*Verse 3.*—“Sing praises unto his name; for it is pleasant.” The work of praising God hath a sort of reward joined with it. When we praise God most we get much benefit by so doing; it is so comely in itself, so pleasant unto God, and profitable to the person that offereth praises, so fit to cheer up his spirit, and strengthen his faith in God, whose praises are the pillars of the believer’s confidence and comfort, that a man should be allured thereunto: “Sing praises unto his name; for it is pleasant;” and this is the second motive or reason to praise God [the first being that “the Lord is good”].—*David Dickson.*

*Verse 4.*—“For the LORD hath chosen,” etc. God’s distinguishing grace should make his elect lift up many a humble, joyful, and thankful heart to him.—*John Trapp.*

*Verse 4.*—“Jacob,” “Israel.” Praise the Lord for enrolling you in this company. To quicken you in this work of praise, consider what you were; you were not a people, God raised you up from the very dunghill to this preferment; remember your past estate. Look, as old Jacob considered what he had been when God preferred him (Gen. xxxii. 10); “With my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands;” so do you say, I am a worthless creature, it is God that hath taken me into his grace, praised be the Lord that hath chosen me. Then consider how many are left to perish in the wide world. Some live out of the church’s pale that never heard of Christ, and many others have only a loose general form of Christianity. Oh! blessed be God that hath chosen me to be of the number of his peculiar people. It is said (Zech. xiii. 8), “And it shall come to pass in all the land, saith the Lord, that two parts shall be cut off and die, but the third shall be left therein.” We pass through many bolters before we come to be God’s peculiar people, as the corn is ground, bolted, searched before it comes to be fine flour. Many have not the knowledge of God, and others live in the church but are carnal; and for me to be one of his peculiar people, a member of Christ’s mystical body, oh! what a privilege is this! And then what moved him to all this? Nothing but his own free grace. Therefore praise the Lord.—*Thomas Manton.*

*Verse 4.*—“His peculiar treasure.” The Hebrew word *segullah* signifieth God’s special jewels, God’s proper ones, or God’s secret ones, that he keeps in store for himself, and for his own special service and use. Princes lock up with their own hands in secret their most precious and costly jewels; and so doth God his: “For the LORD hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure,” or for his secret gain.—*Thomas Brooks.*

*Verse 4.*—“His peculiar treasure.” Will not a man that is not defective in his prudentials secure his jewels? “They shall be mine in that day when I make up my jewels, and I will spare them as a father his son that serveth him:” Malachi iii. 17. If a house be on fire, the owner of it will first take care of his wife and children, then of his jewels, and last of all, of his lumber and rubbish. Christ secures first his people, for they are his jewels; the world is but lumber and rubbish.—*Richard Mayhew.*

*Verse 5.*—“For I know.” The word “I” is made emphatic in the original. Whatever may be the case with others, I have had personal and precious experience of the greatness of Jehovah’s power, and of his infinite supremacy above all other gods. The author of the Psalm may either speak for all Israel as a unit, or he may have framed his song so that every worshipper might say this for himself as his own testimony.—*Henry Cowles.*

*Verse 5.*—“For I know that the LORD is great,” etc. On what a firm foundation does the Psalmist plant his foot—“I know!” One loves to hear men of God speaking in this calm, undoubting, and assured confidence, whether it be of the Lord’s goodness or of the Lord’s greatness. You may perhaps say, that it required

no great stretch of faith or knowledge, or any amount of bravery, to declare that God was great; but I think that not many wise nor mighty had in the Psalmist's days attained unto his knowledge or made his confession, that Jehovah, the God of Israel, was "*above all gods.*" Baal and Chemosh, and Milcom and Dagon, claimed the fealty of the nations round about; and David, in the Court of Achish, would have found his declaration as unwelcome, as it would have been rejected as untrue. Moses once carried a message from Jehovah to the king of Egypt, and his reply was, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice? I know not the Lord;" and even of Jehovah's peculiar treasure, all were not Israel that were of Israel.

There is a knowledge that plays round the head, like lightning on a mountain's summit, that leaves no trace behind; and there is a knowledge that, like the fertilizing stream, penetrates into the very recesses of the heart, and issues forth in all the fruits of holiness, of love, and peace, and joy for evermore.—*Barton Bouchier.*

*Verse 6.*—"Whatsoever the LORD pleased, that did he," etc. He was not forced to make all that he made, but *all that he willed he made.* His will was the cause of all things which he made. Thou makest a house, because if thou didst not make it thou wouldest be left without a habitation: necessity compels thee to make a home, not free-will. Thou makest a garment, because thou wouldest go about naked if thou didst not make it; thou art therefore led to making a garment by necessity, not by free-will. Thou plantest a mountain with vines, thou sowest seed, because if thou didst not do so, thou wouldest not have food; all such things thou doest of necessity. God has made all things of his goodness. He needed nothing that he made; and therefore he hath made all things that he willed.

He did whatsoever he willed in the heaven and earth: dost thou do all that thou willest even in thy field? Thou willest many things, but canst not do all thou wishest in thy own house. Thy wife, perchance, gainsays thee, thy children gainsay thee, sometimes even thy servant contumaciously gainsays thee, and thou doest not what thou willest. But thou sayest, I do what I will, because I punish the disobedient and gainsayer. Even this thou doest not when thou willest.—*Augustine.*

*Verse 6.*—"Whatsoever the LORD pleased, that did he," etc. God's will obtains and hath the upper hand everywhere. Down man, down pope, down devil; you must yield; things shall not be as you will, but as God will! We may well say, "Who hath resisted his will?" Rom. ix. 19. Many, indeed, disobey, and sin against the will of his precept; but none ever did, none ever shall, frustrate or obstruct the will of his purpose; for he will do all his pleasure, and in his way mountains shall become a plain.—*William Slater* (—1704), in "*The Morning Exercises.*"

*Verse 6.*—Upon the Arminian's plan (if absurdity can deserve the name of a plan), the glorious work of God's salvation, and the eternal redemption of Jesus Christ, are not complete, unless a dying mortal lends his arm; that is, unless he, who of himself can do nothing, vouchsafes to begin and accomplish that which all the angels in heaven cannot do; namely, to convert the soul from Satan to God. How contrary is all this to the language of Scripture—how repugnant to the oracles of truth! "Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven and in earth."—*Ambrose Serle* (—1815), in "*Horæ Solitariae.*"

*Verse 6.*—"In heaven and in the earth," etc. His power is infinite. He can do what he will do everywhere; all places are there named but purgatory; perhaps he can do nothing there, but leaves all that work for the Pope.—*Thomas Adams.*

*Verse 6.*—"In the seas, and all deep places." He did wonders in the mighty waters: more than once he made the boisterous sea a calm, and walked upon the surface of it; and as of old he broke up the fountains of the great deep, and drowned the world; and at another time dried up the sea, and led his people through the depths, as through a wilderness; so he will hereafter bind the old serpent, the devil, and cast him into the abyss, into the great deep, the bottomless pit, where he will continue during the thousand years' reign of Christ with his saints.—*John Gill.*

*Verse 6.*—The word "*pleaseth*" limits the general note or particle "*all*" unto all works which in themselves are good, or else serve for good use, and so are pleasing to the Lord for the use sake. He doth not say that the Lord doth all things which are done, but all things which he pleaseth, that is, he doth not make men sinful and wicked, neither doth he work rebellion in men, which is displeasing unto him;

but he doth whatsoever is pleasing, that is, all things which are agreeable to his nature. And whatsoever is according to his will and good pleasure, that he doth, for none can hinder it. This is the true sense and meaning of the words.—*George Walker*, in *"God made visible in his Works,"* 1641.

*Verse 6.*—"Whatsoever the LORD pleased, that did he," etc. With reference to the government of Providence, it is said of God, that "he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth." Even insensible matter is under his control. Fire and hail, snow and vapour, and stormy wind, fulfil his word: and with reference to intelligent agents, we are told that he maketh the most refractory, even the wrath of man, to praise him, and the remainder of wrath he restrains. The whole Bible exhibits Jehovah as so ordering the affairs of individuals, and of nations, as to secure the grand purpose he had in view in creating the world,—viz., the promotion of his own glory, in the salvation of a multitude which no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and tribes, and peoples, and tongues. One of the most prominent distinctions between divine revelation and ordinary history is, that when the same general events are narrated, the latter exhibits—(it is its province so to do—it is not able indeed to do more,) the agency of man, the former, the agency of God. Profane history exhibits the instruments by which Jehovah works; the finger of divine revelation points to the unseen but almighty hand which wields and guides the instrument, and causes even Herod and Pontius Pilate, together with the Jews and the people of Israel, to do what the hand and the counsel of God determined before to be done.—*George Payne*, in *"Lectures on Christian Theology,"* 1850.

*Verse 7.*—"He causeth the vapours to ascend," etc. Dr. Halley made a number of experiments at St. Helena as to the quantity of water that is daily evaporated from the sea, and he found that ten square inches of the ocean's surface yielded one cubic inch of water in twelve hours—a square mile therefore yields 401,448,960 cubic inches, or 6,914 tons of water. From the surface of the Mediterranean Sea during a summer's day there would pass off in invisible vapour five thousand millions of tons of water. This being only for one day, the quantity evaporated in a year would be 365 times greater, and in two thousand years it would amount to four thousand billions of tons, which evaporation would in time empty the Mediterranean Sea; but we have good reason for believing that there is as much water there now as in the time of the Romans, therefore the balance is kept up by the downpour of rain, the influx of the rivers, and the currents from the Atlantic.

Now let us consider the amount of power required for all this evaporation. Mr. Joule, whose experiments have given to the world so much valuable information, says that if we had a pool of water one square mile and six inches in depth to be evaporated by artificial heat, it would require the combustion of 30,000 tons of coal to effect it; therefore to evaporate all the water that ascends from the earth it would take 6,000,000,000,000 (six billion) tons, or more than all the coal that could be stowed away in half-a-dozen such worlds as this; and yet silently and surely has the process of evaporation been going on for millions of years.—*Samuel Kinns*, in *"Moses and Geology,"* 1882.

*Verse 7.*—"He causeth the vapours to ascend," etc. There is no physical necessity that the boiling-point of water should occur at two hundred and twelve degrees of the Fahrenheit scale. As far as we know, it might have been the same with the boiling-points of oil of turpentine, alcohol or ether. We shall see the benevolence of the present adjustment by noticing some of the consequences which would follow if any change were made.

The amount of vapour given off at ordinary temperatures by any liquid depends on the temperature at which it boils. If the boiling-point of water were the same as that of alcohol, the vapour given off by the ocean would be two and a half times as much as at present. Such an excess of aqueous vapour would produce continual rains and inundations, and would make the air too damp for animal, and too cloudy for vegetable life. If water boiled at the same temperature as ether, the vapour rising from the ocean would be more than twenty-five times as much as at present. In such a state of things no man could see the sun on account of the clouds; the rain would be so excessive as to tear up the soil and wash away plants; inundations would be constant, and navigation would be impossible in the inland torrents which would take the place of our rivers. In winter the snow of one day might bury the houses. If, on the other hand, water boiled at the same temperature with

oil of turpentine, the vapour given off by the ocean would be less than one-fourth of its present amount. In this case rain would be a rarity, like an eclipse of the sun, the dryness of the desert of Sahara would be equalled in a large part of the globe, which would, therefore, be bare of vegetation, and incapable of sustaining animal life. Plants would be scorched by unclouded sunshine, springs and rivulets would be dry, and inland navigation would cease; for nearly all the rain would be absorbed by the porous earth.

We see, then, that the boiling-point of water has been adjusted to various relations. It is adjusted to the capacity of space to contain aqueous vapour in a transparent state; if it were higher than two hundred and twelve degrees, the earth would be scorched by an unclouded sun; if it were lower, it would droop under continual shade. It is suited to the demand of plants for water; if it were higher, they would suffer from drought; if it were lower, they would be torn up by floods. It is in harmony with the texture of the soil; if it were higher, the earth would absorb all the rain which falls; if it were lower, the soil would often be washed away by the surface torrents after a shower. It is adapted to the elevation of the continents above the sea; if it were higher, rivers with their present inclination would be so shallow as to be often dry; if it were lower, most rivers would be so deep as to be torrents, while the land would be covered with floods.—*Professor Hemholtz.*

*Verse 7.*—"To ascend from the ends of the earth." Rains in England are often introduced by a south-east wind. "Vapour brought to us by such a wind must have been generated in countries to the south and east of our island. It is therefore, probably, in the extensive valleys watered by the Meuse, the Moselle, and the Rhine, if not from the more distant Elbe, with the Oder and the Weser, that the water rises, in the midst of sunshine, which is soon afterwards to form our clouds, and pour down our thunder-showers." "Drought and sunshine in one part of Europe may be necessary to the production of a wet season in another."\*—*William Whewell* (1795—1866), in "*The Bridgewater Treatise*" [*Astronomy and General Physics*], 1839.

*Verse 7.*—"From the surface of the earth raising the vapours." The whole description is beautifully exact and picturesque. Not "the ends," or even "the summits" or "extreme mountains," for the original is in the singular number (ἄψ), but from the whole of the *extreme layer*, the *superficies* or *surface* of the earth; from every point of which the great process of exhalation is perpetually going on to supply the firmament with refreshing and fruitful clouds.—*John Mason Good.*

*Verse 7.*—"He maketh lightnings for the rain." When the electrical clouds are much agitated, the rain generally falls heavily, and if the agitation is excessive, it hails. As the electricity is dissipated by the frequent discharges the cloud condenses and there comes a sudden and heavy rain; but the greater the accumulation of electricity, the longer is the rain delayed. Thus connected as the electrical phenomena of the atmosphere are with clouds, vapour, and rain, how forcibly are we struck with these appropriate words in the Scriptures.—*Edwin Sidney*, in "*Conversations on the Bible and Science*," 1866.

*Verse 7.*—"He maketh lightnings for the rain." Dr. Russell, in his description of the weather at Aleppo, in September, tells us, that seldom a night passes without much lightning in the north-west quarter, but not attended with thunder; and that when this lightning appears in the west or south-west points, it is a *sure sign* of the approaching rain, which is *often followed* with thunder. This last clause, which is not perfectly clear, is afterwards explained in his more enlarged account of the weather of the year 1746, when he tells us that though it began to be cloudy on the 4th of September, and continued so for a few days, and *even thundered*, yet no rain fell till the 11th, which shows that his meaning was, that the lightning in the west or south-west points, which is often followed with thunder, is a *sure sign* of the approach of rain. I have before mentioned that a squall of wind and clouds of dust are the usual forerunners of these first rains. Most of these things are taken notice of in Ps. cxxxv. 7; Jer. x. 13; li. 16; and serve to illustrate them. Russell's account determines, I think, that the *Nesim*, which our translators render *vapours*, must mean, as they elsewhere translate the word, *clouds*. It shows that God "*maketh lightnings for the rain*," they, in the west and south-west points, being at Aleppo the *sure prognostics* of rain. The squalls of wind bring on these refreshing

\* Howard on the Climate of London.

showers, and are therefore "precious things" of the "treasuries" of God.—*Thomas Harmer.*

*Verse 7.*—"He maketh lightnings for the rain." The Psalmist mentions it as another circumstance calling for our wonder, that *lightnings are mixed with rain*, things quite opposite in their nature one from another. Did not custom make us familiar with the spectacle, we would pronounce this mixture of fire and water to be a phenomenon altogether incredible. The same may be said of the phenomena of the winds. Natural causes can be assigned for them, and philosophers have pointed them out; but the winds, with their various currents, are a wonderful work of God. He does not merely assert the power of God, be it observed, in the sense in which philosophers themselves grant it, but he maintains that not a drop of rain falls from heaven without a divine commission or dispensation to that effect. All readily allow that God is the author of rain, thunder, and wind, in so far as he originally established the order of things in nature; but the Psalmist goes farther than this, holding that when it rains, this is not effected by a blind instinct of nature, but is the consequence of the decree of God, who is pleased at one time to darken the sky with clouds, and at another to brighten it again with sunshine.—*John Calvin.*

*Verse 7.*—"He maketh lightnings for the rain." It is a great instance of the divine wisdom and goodness, that lightning should be accompanied by rain, to soften its rage, and prevent its mischievous effects. Thus, in the midst of judgment, does God remember mercy. The threatenings in his word against sinners are like lightning; they would blast and scorch us up, were it not for his promises made in the same word to penitents, which, as a gracious rain, turn aside their fury, refreshing and comforting our affrighted spirits.—*George Horne.*

*Verse 7.*—"He bringeth the wind out of his treasures." That is, say some, out of the caves and hollow places of the earth; but I rather conceive that because the wind riseth many times on a sudden, and as our Saviour saith (John iii. 8), "we cannot tell whence it cometh," therefore God is said here to bring it forth, as if he had it locked up in readiness in some secret and hidden treasures or storehouses.—*Arthur Jackson.*

*Verse 7.*—"He bringeth the wind." The winds are with great beauty, represented as laid up by him as jewels in a treasure house. Indeed, few verses better express creative control, than those in which the winds, which make sport of man's efforts and defy his power, are represented as thus ready to spring forth at God's bidding from the quarters where they quietly sleep. The occasion comes, the thoughts of Jehovah find expression in his providence, and his ready servants leap suddenly forth: "*He bringeth the winds out of his treasures.*" But this bringing forth is not for physical purposes only; it is for great moral and spiritual ends also. Take one illustration out of many. His people were on the edge of deepest and most brutish idolatry. They were ready to fall into a most degraded form of idol worship, when he offered to them that ever yearning heart of Fatherly love: "Thus saith the Lord, Learn not the way of the heathen." Their God is only "the tree cut out of the forest," silvered over, or decked with gold; "upright as the palm tree, but speaks not; the stock is a doctrine of vanities; but the Lord is the true God; he maketh lightnings with rain; he bringeth the wind out of his treasures." Jer. x. 2—16. Thus, too, the words of Agur to Ithiel and Ucal, "He hath gathered the wind in his fists." Prov. xxx. 4.—*John Duns, in "Science and Christian Thought,"* 1868.

*Verse 8.*—"Who smote the firstborn of Egypt." The firstborn only were smitten; these were singled out in every family with unerring precision, the houses of the Israelites, wherever the blood of the lamb was sprinkled on the door-posts, being passed over. The death of all those thousands, both of man and beast, took place at the same instant—"at midnight."

Is God unrighteous, then, that taketh vengeance? No; this is an act of retribution. The Egyptians had slain the children of the Israelites, casting their infants into the river. Now the affliction is turned upon themselves; the delight of their eyes is taken from them; all their firstborn are dead, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat upon his throne, unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon.—*Thomas S. Millington, in "Signs and Wonders in the Land of Ham,"* 1873.

*Verse 8.*—"And beast." The Egyptians worshipped many animals, and when the firstborn of the sacred animals died the circumstance greatly increased the

impressiveness of the plague as an assault upon the gods of Egypt.—*C. H. S. Suggested by Otto Von Gerlach.*

Verses 8, 9, 10—12.—Worthy is Jahve to be praised, for he is the Redeemer out of Egypt. Worthy is he to be praised, for he is the Conqueror of the Land of Promise.—*Franz Delitzsch.*

Verse 9.—“*Who sent tokens and wonders.*”—“*Tokens,*” that is, signs or evidences of the Divine power. “*Wonders,*” things fitted to impress the mind with awe; things outside of the ordinary course of events; things not produced by natural laws, but by the direct power of God. The allusion here is, of course, to the plagues of Egypt, as recorded in Exodus.—*Albert Barnes.*

Verse 10.—“*Who smote great nations,*” etc. It is better that the wicked should be destroyed a hundred times over than that they should tempt those who are as yet innocent to join their company. Let us but think what might have been our fate, and the fate of every other nation under heaven at this hour, had the sword of the Israelites done its work more sparingly. Even as it was, the small portions of the Canaanites who were left, and the nations around them, so tempted the Israelites by their idolatrous practices that we read continually of the whole people of God turning away from his service. But, had the heathen lived in the land in equal numbers, and, still more, had they intermarried largely with the Israelites, how was it possible humanly speaking, that any sparks of the light of God’s truth should have survived to the coming of Christ? Would not the Israelites have lost all their peculiar character; and if they had retained the name of Jehovah as of their God, would they not have formed as unworthy notions of his attributes, and worship him with a worship as abominable as that which the Moabites paid to Chemosh or the Philistines to Dagon?

But this was not to be, and therefore the nations of Canaan were to be cut off utterly. The Israelites, sword, in its bloodiest executions, wrought a work of mercy for all the countries of the earth to the very end of the world. They seem of very small importance to us now, these perpetual contests with the Canaanites, and the Midianites, and the Ammonites, and the Philistines, with which the Books of Joshua and Judges and Samuel are almost filled. We may half wonder that God should have interfered in such quarrels, or have changed the course of nature, in order to give one of the nations of Palestine the victory over another. But in these contests, on the fate of one of these nations of Palestine the happiness of the human race depended. The Israelites fought not for themselves only, but for us. It might follow that they should thus be accounted the enemies of all mankind,—it might be that they were tempted by their very distinctness to despise other nations; still they did God’s work,—still they preserved unhurt the seed of eternal life, and were the ministers of blessing to all other nations, even though they themselves failed to enjoy it.—*Thomas Arnold, 1795—1842.*

Verse 10.—“*Who smote great nations,*” etc. Let us not stand in fear of any enemies that rise up against us, and conspire to hinder the peace of the church, and stop the passage of the gospel; when God beginneth to take the cause of his people into his own hand, and smiteth any of his enemies on the jaw-bone, the rest are reserved to the like destruction. For wherefore doth God punish his adversaries, and enter into judgment with them? Wherefore doth he visit them, and strike them down with his right hand! Is it only to take vengeance, and to show his justice in their confusion? No, it serveth for the comfort and consolation of his servants, that howsoever God be patient, yet in the end they shall not escape.—*William Attersoll, 1618.*

Verse 11.—“*Sihon king of the Amorites, and Og.*” Notice is taken of two kings, Sihon and Og, not as being more powerful than the rest, but because shutting up the entrance to the land in front they were the most formidable enemies met with, and the people, besides, were not as yet habituated to war.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 11.—“*Sihon king of the Amorites.*” When Israel arrived on the borders of the promised Land they encountered Sihon. (Numb. xxi. 21.) He was evidently a man of very great courage and audacity. Shortly before the time of Israel’s arrival he had dispossessed the Moabites of a splendid territory, driving them south of the natural bulwark of the Arnon with great slaughter and the loss of a great number of captives (xxi. 26—29). When the Israelite host appears, he does not



hesitate or temporize like Balak, but at once gathers his people together and attacks them. But the battle was his last. He and all his host were destroyed, and their district from Arnon to Jabbok became at once the possession of the conqueror.

Josephus (Ant. iv. 5, § 2) has preserved some singular details of the battle, which have not survived in the text either of the Hebrew or LXX. He represents the Amorite army as containing every man in the nation fit to bear arms. He states that they were unable to fight when away from the shelter of their cities, and that being especially galled by the slings and arrows of the Hebrews, and at last suffering severely from thirst, they rushed to the stream and to the recesses of the ravine of the Arnon. Into these recesses they were pursued by their active enemy and slaughtered in vast numbers.

Whether we accept these details or not, it is plain, from the manner in which the name of Sihon fixed itself in the national mind, and the space which his image occupies in the official records, and in the later poetry of Israel, that he was a truly formidable chieftain.—*George Grove, in Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, 1863.*

*Verse 11.*—*Sihon*, although conqueror of Moab, and much more formidable than the Canaanites whom Israel had feared at Kadesh, fell easily because Israel fought in faith. There is no adversary that can really offer any effectual opposition to our onward march if assailed in the strength of Christ with a cheerful courage.

*Og the king of Bashan* was much more formidable even than *Sihon*, but he seems to have fallen yet more easily, judging from the brief notice of the conquest. Even so, when once we have overcome a difficulty or conquered an evil habit in the strength of faith, other conquests open out before us readily and naturally which we should not have dared to contemplate before. It is most true in religion that "nothing succeeds like success."—*R. Winterbotham, in "The Pulpit Commentary," 1881.*

*Verse 11.*—"Og king of Bashan." The task was not an easy one, for Edrei—"the strong"—Og's capital, was in ordinary circumstances almost unassailable, since it was, strange to say, built in a hollow artificially scooped out of the top of a hill, which the deep gorge of the Hieromax isolates from the country round. Its streets may be still seen running in all directions beneath the present town of Adraha. But Kenath, in the district called Argob—"the strong"—was still stronger, for it was built in the crevices of a great island of lava which has split, in cooling, into innumerable fissures, through whose labyrinth no enemy could safely penetrate. In these were its streets and houses, some of which, of a later date, with stone doors, turning on hinges of stone, remain till this day. . . . Nor were these the only fastnesses. No fewer than sixty cities "fenced with high walls, gates, and bars" (Deut. iii. 5), had to be taken; but they all fell, sooner or later, before the vigorous assaults of the invaders, and, long afterwards, there might be seen, in the capital of their allies, the Ammonites, one of the trophies of the campaign—the gigantic iron bedstead of King Og, or as some think, the huge sarcophagus he had prepared for himself, as was the custom with Canaanite kings.—*Cunningham Geikie, in "Hours with the Bible," 1881.*

*Verse 12.*—"Their land for an heritage." The land was given to them to be transmitted from father to son, by hereditary right and succession.—*Joseph Addison Alexander.*

*Verse 13.*—"Thy name, O LORD, endureth for ever," etc. Immutability is a glory belonging to all the attributes of God. It is not a single perfection of the Divine nature, nor is it limited to particular objects thus and thus disposed. Mercy and justice have their distinct objects and distinct acts: mercy is conversant about a penitent, justice about an obstinate sinner. In our conceptions of the Divine perfections, his perfections are different. The wisdom of God is not his power, nor his power his holiness; but immutability is the centre wherein they all unite. There is not one perfection which may not be said to be, and truly is, immutable; none of them will appear so glorious about this beam, the sun of immutability, which renders them highly excellent, without the least shadow of imperfection. How cloudy would his blessedness be, if it were changeable; how dim his wisdom, if it might be obscured; how feeble his power, if it were capable of becoming sickly and languishing; how would mercy lose much of its lustre, if it could change into wrath, and justice much of its dread, if it could be turned into mercy; while the object of justice remains unfit for mercy, and one that hath need of mercy continues

only fit for the Divine fury? But unchangeableness is the thread that runs through the whole web; it is the enamel of all the rest; none of them without it could look with a triumphant aspect.—*Stephen Charnock*.

Verse 13.—“*Thy name, O LORD, endureth for ever.*” God is, and will be always the same to his church, a gracious, faithful, wonder-working God; and his church is, and will be the same to him, a thankful, praising people; and thus his name endures for ever.—*Matthew Henry*.

Verse 13.—“*Thy memorial, O LORD, throughout all generations;*” or, *the remembrance of them to generation and generation;* to every age. The love of Christ is remembered by his people in every age, as they enjoy the blessings of his grace in redemption, justification, pardon, etc. It cannot be forgotten as long as the gospel is preached, the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper administered, and the Lord has a people in the world; all which will be as long as the sun and moon endure, and there will therefore always be a memorial of him.—*John Gill*.

Verse 14.—“*For the LORD will judge his people,*” etc. Is it so, that all providence is for the good of the church? This is comfort in the low estate of the church at any time. God’s eye is upon his people even whilst he seems to have forsaken them. If he seems to be departed, it is but in some other part of the earth, to show himself strong for them; wherever his eye is fixed in any part of the world, his church hath his heart, and his church’s relief is his end. Though the church may sometimes lie among the pots in a dirty condition, yet there is a time of resurrection, when God will restore it to its true glory, and make it as white as a dove with its silver wings: Ps. lxxviii. 13. The sun is not always obscured by a thick cloud, but it will be freed from the darkness of it. “*God will judge his people, and he will repent himself concerning his servants*” [the original is, *Comfort himself*]. It is a comfort to God to deliver his people, and he will do it when it shall be most comfortable to his glory and to their hearts.—*Stephen Charnock*.

Verse 14.—“*He will repent himself.*” The original word “*repent himself*” here has a very extensive signification, which cannot be expressed by any one English rendering. It implies taking compassion upon them, with the intention of being comforted in their future, and of taking vengeance on their oppressors. Such are the several meanings in which the word is used. Language fails to express the mind of God toward his faithful people. How dear ought his counsels to be to us, and the consideration of all his ways! This reflection was continually urged upon the nation of Israel, so liable as they were to fall away to idolatry.—*W. Wilson*.

Verse 15.—“*The idols of the heathen.*” The shrines on the hill-tops were very rude affairs, enclosures formed by rough stone walls, and containing ragamuffin gods—stocks of weather-beaten wood, blocks of battered stone, and lumps of rusty old iron. The carved wooden gods were so much the worse for the weather, that their features, if they ever had any, were altogether defaced. One, not made of a single piece, like the rest, but built together by joiner work, had fared worse than its more humble neighbours. His arms were gone, and his breast, heart, and stomach had all fallen out; strange to say, his head remained, and it was laughable to see such a hollow mockery stare at you with a solemn face. The stone images were sadly battered by tumbling about among the rubbish, and the cast-metal gods mostly had their heads broken off and set carefully on again, to stand there till the next storm would send them rolling. Thus God is not only robbed in the valley, but men climb up as near to heaven as they can, and insult him to his face.—*James Gilmour, in “Among the Mongols,” 1883.*

Verse 15.—“*The idols,*” etc. Herodotus telleth us that Amasis had a large laver of gold, wherein both he and his guests used to wash their feet. This vessel he brake and made a god of it, which the Egyptians devoutly worshipped. And the like idolomania is at this day found among Papists, what distinction soever they would fain make betwixt an *idol* and an *image*, which indeed (as they use them) are all one.—*John Trapp*.

Verse 15.—“*Silver and gold.*” By singling out these metals, the most precious materials of which the idols were framed, and pouring contempt upon even these costly images, the Psalmist heightens the scorn which he implies for such as were of inferior price, and which had not the one element of costliness in their favour. And when we bear in mind the Apostles saying that covetousness is idolatry we shall be warned that we, too, may need this lesson against worshipping silver and

gold, or the worldly wisdom and specious eloquence which may be compared to these metals.—*Neale and Littledale.*

*Verses 15, 16, 17.*—"The work of men's hands." Therefore they should rather, if it were possible, worship man, as their creator and lord, than be worshipped by him.—*Matthew Pool, 1624—1679.*

*Verses 15, 16, 17.*—The Rev. John Thomas, a missionary in India, was one day travelling alone through the country, when he saw a great number of people waiting near an idol temple. He went up to them, and as soon as the doors were opened, he walked into the temple. Seeing an idol raised above the people, he walked boldly up to it, held up his hand, and asked for silence. He then put his fingers on its eyes, and said, "It has eyes, but it cannot see! It has ears, but it cannot hear! It has a nose, but it cannot smell! It has hands, but it cannot handle! It has a mouth, but it cannot speak! Neither is there any breath in it!" Instead of doing injury to him for affronting their god and themselves, the natives were all surprised; and an old Brahmin was so convinced of his folly by what Mr. Thomas said, that he also cried out, "It has feet, but cannot run away!" The people raised a shout, and being ashamed of their stupidity, they left the temple, and went to their homes—*From "The New Cyclopædia of Illustrative Anecdote," 1875.*

*Verses 16, 17.*—"Mouths," "eyes," "ears." So many members as the images have, serving to represent perfections ascribed to them, so many are the lies.—*David Dickson.*

*Verses 16—17.*—They can neither *speak* in answer to your prayers and enquiries, nor *see* what you do or what you want, nor *hear* your petitions, nor *smell* your incenses and sacrifices, nor use their *hands* either to take anything from you, or to give anything to you; nor so much as *mutter*, nor give the least sign of apprehending your condition or concerns.—*Matthew Pool.*

*Verses 16—17.*—"Mouths, but they speak not:" "ears, but they hear not."

A heated fancy or imagination  
 May be mistaken for an inspiration.  
 True; but is this conclusion fair to make  
 That inspiration must be all mistake?  
 A pebble-stone is not a diamond: true;  
 But must a diamond be a pebble too?  
 To own a God who does not speak to men,  
 Is first to own, and then disown again;  
 Of all idolatry the total sum  
 Is having gods that are both deaf and dumb.

*John Byrom, 1691—1763.*

*Verse 18.*—"Like them shall be those making them, every one who (is) trusting in them." If the meaning had been simply, those who make them *are* like them, Hebrew usage would have required the verb to be suppressed. Its insertion, therefore, in the future form (יִהְיֶה) requires it to be rendered strictly *shall be*, i.e., in fate as well as character. Idolaters shall perish with their perishable idols. See Isa. i. 31.—*Joseph Addison Alexander.*

*Verse 18.*—People never rise above the level of their gods, which are to them their better nature.—*Andrew Robert Faussett.*

*Verse 18.*—"They that make them are like unto them." Idolatry is a benumbing sin, which bereaveth the idolater of the right use of his senses.—*David Dickson.*

*Verse 18.*—"They that make them," etc. Teacheth us, that the idol, the idol-maker, and all such also as serve idols, are not only beastly and blockish before men, but shall before God, in good time, come to shame and confusion.—*Thomas Wilcocks, 1549—1608.*

*Verse 18.*—"Like unto them." A singular phenomenon, known as the Spectre of the Brocken, is seen on a certain mountain in Germany. The traveller who at dawn stands on the topmost ridge beholds a colossal shadowy spectre. But in fact it is only his own shadow projected upon the morning mists by the rising sun; and it imitates, of course, every movement of its creator. So heathen nations have mistaken their own image for Deity. Their gods display human frailties and passions and scanty virtues, projected and magnified upon the heavens, just as the small figures on the slide of a magic-lantern are projected, magnified, and

illuminated upon a white sheet.—From *Elan Foster's New Cyclopædia of Illustrations*, 1870.

Verse 18.—“*Like unto them.*” How many are like idol-images, when they have eyes, ears, and mouths as though they had none : that is, when they do not use them when and how they should !—*Christoph Starke.*

Verse 19.—“*Bless the LORD.*” Blessing of God is to wish well to, and speak well of God, out of good-will to God himself, and a sense of his goodness to ourselves. God loves your good word, that is, to be spoken of well by you ; he rejoiceth in your well-wishes, and to hear from you expressions of rejoicings in his own independent blessedness. Though God hath an infinite ocean of all blessedness, to which we can add nothing, and he is therefore called by way of eminency, “The Blessed One” (Mark xiv. 61), a title solely proper and peculiar to him, yet he delights to hear the *amen* of the saints, his creatures, resounding thereto ; he delights to hear us utter our “so be it.”—*Thomas Goodwin.*

Verse 19.—“*Bless the LORD.*” And not an idol (Isa. lxvi. 3), as the Philistines, did their Dagon and as Papists still do their he-saints and she-saints.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 20.—“*Bless the LORD, O house of Levi.*” In Ps. cxv. the exhortation given is to *trust* or *hope* in the Lord ; here, to *bless* him. The *Levites* are mentioned in addition to the house of Aaron, there being two orders of priesthood. Everything else in the two Psalms is the same, except that, in the last verse, the Psalmist here joins himself, along with the rest of the Lord’s people, in blessing God.—*Franz Delitzsch.*

Verse 20.—“*Ye that fear the LORD, bless the LORD.*” These are distinct from the Israelites, priests, and Levites, and design the proselytes among them of other nations that truly feared God, as Jarchi notes ; and all such persons, whoever and wherever they are, have reason to bless the Lord for the fear of him they have, which is not from nature but from grace ; and for the favours shown them, the blessings bestowed upon them, the good things laid up for them, and the guard that is about them, which the Scriptures abundantly declare, and experience confirms.—*John Gill.*

Verse 20.—“*Ye that fear the LORD, bless the LORD.*” In Scripture it is quite common to find this “*fear*” put for holiness itself, or the sum of true religion. It is not, therefore, such a fear as seized the hearts of our first parents when, hearing the voice of the Lord God, they hid themselves amongst the trees of the garden ; nor such as suddenly quenched the noise of royal revelry in the night of Babylon’s overthrow ; nor such as, on some day yet future, shall drive despairing sinners to the unavailing shelter of the mountains and rocks. It is not the fear of guilty distrust, or of hatred, or of bondage—that fear which hath torment, and which perfect love casteth out ; but a fear compatible with the highest privileges, attainments, and hopes of the Christian life. It is the fear of deep humility and reverence, and filial subjection, and adoring gratitude ; the fear which “blesseth the Lord,” saying, “*His mercy endureth for ever.*”—*John Lillie* (1812—1867), in “*Lectures on the Epistles of Peter.*”

Verse 21.—The conclusion, verse 21, alludes to the conclusion of the preceding Psalm. There, the Lord blesses thee out of Zion ; here, let him be blessed out of Zion. The praise proceeds from the same place from which the blessing issues. For Zion is the place where the community dwells with God.—*E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Verse 21.—“*Praise ye the LORD.*” When the song of praise is sung unto God, the work of his praise is not ended, but must be continued, renewed, and followed still : “*Praise ye the LORD.*”—*David Dickson.*

Verse 21.—“*Bless,*” “*Praise.*” We are not only to bless God, but to praise him : “All thy works shall praise thee, O LORD ; and thy saints shall bless thee.” Blessing relateth to his benefits, praise to his excellencies. We bless him for what he is to us, we praise him for what he is in himself. Now, whether we bless him, or praise him ; it is still to increase our love to him, and delight in him ; for God is not affected with the flattery of empty praises ; yet this is an especial duty, which is of use to you, as all other duties are. It doth you good to consider him as an infinite and eternal Being, and of glorious and incomprehensible majesty. It is pleasant and profitable to us.—*Thomas Manton.*

## HINTS TO PREACHERS.

*Verses 1—4.*—I. The Employment. Praise three times commended, and in three respects. 1. With respect to God: not his works merely, but himself. 2. With respect to ourselves: it is pleasant and profitable. 3. With respect to others: it best recommends our religion to all who hear it. All others are religions of fear, ours of joy and praise. II. The Persons: servants in attendance at his house, who stand there by appointment, ready to hear, ready to obey. III. The Motives. 1. In general. It is due to God, because he is good; and it is pleasant to us: verse 3. 2. In particular. Those who are specially privileged by God should specially praise him: verse 4. "This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise."—G. R.

*Verse 1.*—"Praise ye the LORD." I. The Lord ought to be praised. II. He ought to be praised *by you*. III. He ought to be praised *now*: let us remember his present favours. IV. He ought to be praised in everything for ever.

*Verse 1.*—"Praise him, O ye servants of the LORD." I. Praise him for the privilege of serving him. II. Praise him for the power to serve him. III. Praise him for the acceptance of your service. IV. Praise him as the chief part of your service. V. Praise him that others may be induced to engage in his service.—W. H. J. P.

*Verse 2.*—What is at this day "the house of the Lord"? Who may be said to stand in it? What special reasons have they for praise?

*Verse 2.*—The nearer to God, the dearer to God; and the better our place, the sweeter our praise.—W. B. H.

*Verses 2—5.*—"Our God," "Our Lord." Sweet subject. See our Exposition.

*Verse 3.*—Praise the Lord, I. For the excellence of his nature. II. For the revelation of his name. III. For the pleasantness of his worship.

*Verse 4.*—It is a song of praise, and therefore election is mentioned because it is a motive for song. I. *The Choice*—"The Lord hath chosen." Divine. Sovereign. Gracious. Immutable. II. *The Consecration*—"Chosen Jacob to himself." To know him. To preserve his truth. To maintain his worship. To manifest his grace. To keep alive the hope of the Coming One. III. *The Separation*—implied in the special choice. By being taken into covenant: Abraham and his seed. By receiving the covenant inheritance: Canaan. By redemption. By power and by blood out of Egypt. Wilderness separation. Settled establishment in their own land. IV. *The Elevation*. In name—from Jacob to Israel. In value—from worthless to precious. In purpose and use—crown jewels. In preservation—kept as treasures. In delight—God rejoices in his people as his heritage.

*Verse 5.*—"I know that the LORD is great." I. By observing nature and providence. II. By reading his word. III. By my own conversion, comfort, and regeneration. IV. By my after-experience. V. By my overpowering communion with him.

*Verse 5.*—Delicious dogmatism. "I know," etc. I. What I know. 1. The Lord. 2. That he is great. 3. That he is above all. II. Why I know it. 1. Because he is "our Lord." 2. By his operations in nature, providence, and grace (vers. 6—13) III. My incorrigible obstinacy in this regard is proof against worshippers of all other gods: which gods are effeminate; without sovereignty; no god, or any god.—W. B. H.

*Verse 6.*—"Whatsoever the LORD pleased, that did he." *God's good pleasure in the work of grace*. Seen, *not* in the death of the wicked, Ezek. xxxiii. 11; but in the election of his people, 1 Sam. xii. 22; in the infliction of suffering on the substitute, Isa. liii. 10; in the provision of all fulness for his people in Christ, Col. i. 19, in the arrangement of salvation by faith in Christ, John vi. 39; in instituting preaching as the means of salvation, 1 Cor. i. 21; in the adoption of believers as his children, Eph. i. 5; in their sanctification, 1 Thess. iv. 3; in their ultimate triumph and reign, Luke xii. 32.—C. A. D.

*Verse 6 (last words).*—The power of God in places of trouble, change, and danger—*seas*; and in conditions of sin, weakness, despair, perplexity—in all *deep places*.

*Verses 6—12.*—The Resistless Pleasure of Jehovah. I. Behold it as here exemplified: 1. Ruling all nature. 2. Overturning a rebellious nation. 3. Making sport of kings and crowns. 4. Laying a fertile country at the feet of the chosen. II. Be wise in view thereof. 1. Submit to it: it sweeps the seas, and lays hands on earth and heaven. 2. Think not to hide from it: the "ends of the earth"

and "all deep places" are open to it; it is swifter than its own lightnings. 3. Be awed by its majesty: God's way is strewn with crowns and the bones of kings. 4. Seek its protection: its mightiest efforts are in defence of those it favours. 5. Let the Lord's people fear not with so great a God, and so exhaustless an armoury.—*W. B. H.*

*Verse 13.*—"Thy name, O LORD, endureth for ever." I. As the embodiment of perfection: God's attributes and glory. II. As the object of veneration: "Holy and reverend is his name." III. As the cause of salvation: "For my name's sake," etc. IV. As the centre of attraction: "In his name shall the Gentiles trust." "Our desire is to the remembrance of thy name." "Where two or three are gathered in my name," etc. V. As a plea in supplication: "For thy name's sake, pardon," etc. "Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name." VI. As a warrant for action: "Whatsoever ye do, do all in the name," etc. VII. As a refuge in tribulation: "The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." "I have kept them in thy name." VIII. As a mark of glorification: "I will write upon him the name of my God." IX. As a terror to transgressors: "My name is dreadful among the heathen."—*W. J.*

*Verse 14.*—"The LORD will judge his people." Others would like to do it, but must not. The world has seven judgment-days in every week, but shall not be able to condemn the saints. He himself will judge. How will he judge them? 1. Their persons, as to whether they are in or out of Christ. 2. Their principles, as to whether they are genuine or spurious. 3. Their prayers, as to whether they are availing or useless. 4. Their profession, as to whether it is true or false. 5. Their procedure, as to whether it is good or bad.—*W. J.*

*Verse 14.*—I. The position of believers—"his people," "his servants." II. The discipline of God's family. III. The tenderness of the Lord to them. IV. The safety of believers: they are still the Lord's.

*Verse 15.*—"Silver and gold." These are idols in our own land, among worldlings, and with some professors. Show the folly and wickedness of loving riches, and the evils which come of it.

*Verses 16, 17.*—The Portrait of many. I. "Mouths, but they speak not." No prayer, praise, confession. II. "Eyes, but they see not." Discern not, understand not, take no warning; do not look to Christ. III. "Ears, but they hear not." Attend no ministry, or are present but unaffected; hear not God. IV. "Neither is there any breath in their mouths." No life, no tokens of life, no prayer and praise which are the breath of spiritual life.

*Verse 18.*—I. Men make idols like themselves. II. The idols make their makers like themselves. Describe both processes.

*Verse 19.*—"House of Israel." The Lord's great goodness to all his people, perceived and proclaimed, and the Lord praised for it.

*Verse 19.*—"House of Aaron." God's blessing on Aaron's house typical of his grace to those who are priests unto God.

*Verses 19—21.*—I. The Exhortation. 1. To bless the Lord. 2. To bless him in his own house. II. To whom it is addressed. 1. To the house of Israel, or the whole church. 2. To the house of Aaron, or ministers of the sanctuary. 3. To the house of Levi, or the attendants upon ministers, and assistants in the services. 4. To all who fear God, wherever they may be. Even they who fear God are invited to praise him, which is a sure sign that he delighteth in mercy.—*G. R.*

*Verse 20.*—The Levites, their history, duties, rewards, and obligations to bless God.

*Verse 20 (second clause).*—I. The fear of God includes all religion. II. The fear of the Lord suggests praise. III. The fear of the Lord renders praise acceptable.

*Verse 21.*—I. The double fact. 1. Blessing perpetually ascending from Zion to God. 2. God perpetually blessing his people by dwelling with them in Zion. II. The double reason for praise, which is found in the double fact, and concerns every member of the church.